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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 28, 2014
TO: Nevada's Licensure Boards
FROM: Caleb S. Cage, Director of Military and Veterans Policy
RE: Veterans Licensure Reciprocity and Data efforts

I. BACKGROUND

- On January 6, 2014, Governor Sandoval proclaimed 2014 to be the "Year of the Veteran" in Nevada. The goals of this proclamation were to focus as many services and service providers in the state as possible on the challenges facing veterans, to develop and implement best practices for addressing those challenges, and, by the end of the year, to make Nevada the most veteran- and military-friendly state in the country. Because of the anticipated end of deployments to Afghanistan, and the coming military drawdown, 2014 is a crucial year for Nevada to meet these goals.
- The "Year of the Veteran" concept is built upon several years of work towards marshalling all available resources to service members, veterans, and their families under the Green Zone Initiative (GZI). The GZI is a statewide strategic plan focused on the three areas of Wellness, Education, and Employment, and it is also a collaboration architecture aimed at building local coalitions and coordinating them throughout the state.

II. CURRENT SITUATION

- Within the Employment focus area of the GZI, the Governor has developed several efforts, one of which is an effort to reduce barriers to entry for service members, veterans, and their families. These efforts are based on the fact that many service members and veterans have considerable skills, talents, and extensive training, much of which can be recognized as official experience and training with respect to transition into civilian licensure and employment.
- The Governor's first major action toward this goal was signing Executive Order 2012-11, which provided for reciprocity for military spouses seeking licensure within Nevada.
- In 2013, the Office of the Governor received a Policy Academy grant from the National Governor's Association to help reduce veteran unemployment through increasing licensure reciprocity opportunities for veterans, either through bridge programs, challenge opportunities, or other forms of reciprocity. The grant is focused on developing opportunities in the fields of Emergency Medical Services, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Law Enforcement.

- In May of 2014, Governor Sandoval signed Executive Order 2014-11, requiring the professional licensing bodies in each of these fields to establish reciprocity opportunities that made sense within their field. The order also requires each to develop appropriate questions to add to renewal and licensure applications to better capture the number of service members and veterans holding license or seeking licensure in Nevada and to report that information in aggregate to the Nevada Department of Veterans Services.

III. **GOING FORWARD**

- Following the completion of the Policy Academy grant from the National Governor's Association, there is a clear desire to extend these opportunities to other licensed fields as well.
- In their May 2014 report to Governor Sandoval, the Interagency Council on Veterans Affairs made several recommendations regarding licensure reciprocity to be considered ahead of the next Legislative Session. First, that the state should pass legislation that would "provide a general requirement for state licensing boards and bodies to develop licensure reciprocity opportunities for service members, veterans, and their families holding federal licenses that are not currently recognized by the State of Nevada." Second, that the state should pass legislation that would require licensing bodies in Nevada to capture and share aggregate data regarding the number of veterans seeking and/or receiving licensure or renewal and share that information with the Nevada Department of Veterans Services and the Interagency Council on Veterans Affairs on an annual basis.